THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) The amount of foreign exchange released for the import of these commodities during the period 1st January 1985 to 31st January. 1986 is indicated below:-

(Rs. crores)

	Amount of foreign exchange released	
	January Dec.1985	January 1986
Sugar	453·5	150 0
Fertilizers	1483·5	Nil
Fertilizers raw materials		
(1) Sulphur	294·5	..
(2) Raw- phosphate	171·8	..

(b) These imports became necessary for bridging the gap between demand and indigenous availability.

(c) The balance of trade position reflects the increase or decrease in imports and exports of various commodities and to this extent, would be affected by the imports of fertilizers and sugar referred to in (a) and (b) above.

Return of tobacco

957. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the per acre return of production of tobacco that the farmers get at present;

(b) whether it is a fact that the return is very low in comparison to that which the farmers of other countries get: and

(c) if so, what measures the Central Government propose to take to enhance the return of tobacco growers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER): (a) The average yield of Tobacco in India is estimated at around 1100 kg. per hactare.

(b) Yes, Sir. The yield is low due to low productivity and poor quality of tobacco produced as compared to other compating countries.

(c) The Tobacco Board is implementing various technical programmes like Varietal Trials, Integrated Pest Management, Topping and Desuckering, and is taking other steps like supply of various inputs, improved cultural practices etc. in collaboration with State Governments and other agencies like the Directorate of Tobacco Development and Central Tobacco Research Institute to increase production. Simultaneously, efforts are under way to evolve varieties capable of giving appreciable increases in the average farmer's holdings. Auction System has been introduced in the States of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh for the sale of Virginia Flue-cured Tobacco to ensure remunerative prices to the growers.

Accidents in mines

958. SHRI KALPNATH RAI:
SHRI J. P. GOYAL:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of accidents in mines during 1985 resulting in deaths and injuries to mine workers; and

(b) whether any new rules and regulations have been formulated to ensure the safety of mine workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) The number of accidents which took place

during the year 1985 in mines resulting in deaths and injuries to mine workers are as given in the table below:—

No. of fatal accidents	No. of persons killed	No. of accidents leading to serious bodily injury	No. of persons seriously injured
245	277	1,390	1,455

The Mines Act, 1952 was amended with effect from 31st May, 1984, according to which injury is categorised as 'reportable injury' and 'serious bodily injury'. Reportable injury involves all injuries other than serious bodily injuries where there is enforced absence of the injured person from work for a period of 72 hours or more. Serious bodily injury includes any injury which results in permanent loss of any part or section of a body, permanent loss or injury to the sight or hearing or injury resulting in permanent physical incapacity or fracture of any bone or any one or more joints or bones of any phalange of hand or foot.

Consequent on the amendment of the Mines Act, 1952, the Coal Mines Regulations, 1957 and the Metalliferous Mines Regulations, 1961 were amended in July, 1985. Important provisions relating to safety covered by these amendments are:—

(1) Specifying the duties of the officials above the rank of managers, who for the purposes of the Mines Act are nominated as agents;

(2) Requiring each mine to prepare an emergency plan for use in time of emergency;

(3) Supply and use of self-rescuer has been made obligatory in gassy coal mines of third degree.

Export of long staple raw cotton

959. SHRI O. J. JOSEPH:
SHRI DIPEN GHOSH:
SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:
DR. R. K. PODDAR:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to allow private export of long staple raw cotton;

(b) if so, at what level the decision in this regard was taken; and

(c) what are the reasons for such a change in the policy decision for and what will be its impact on the Cotton Corporation of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) to (c) After reviewing the cotton supply and demand situation in the country, Government have released a substantial quantity for export during the current cotton season. The private trade has also been allocated some quantity with a view to boosting cotton export. Sufficient quantity of cotton has also been released for export in favour of Cotton Corporation of India.

Symposium on plantation crops

960. SHRI SHANTIMOY GHOSH:
SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the deliberations of a symposium on plantation crops held in Delhi wherein it was stated that by the year 2000 A.D. India will be forced to import tea for domestic consumption; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?